

SOS POL. SC. & PUB. ADMN.,

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UNIT-V

TOPIC: OBJECTIVES & TYPES OF EMPLOYEE

COUNSELLING

Employee Counselling: Meaning, Concept, Need, Objectives, Type.

Employee Counselling – Introduction

In the present highly complex environment, HR counselling has become very important responsibility of HR managers as counselling plays vital role in different aspects of managing human resources like career planning and development, performance management, stress management, and other areas which may affect employees emotionally. Counselling has very wide application both within and without organizational context.

In the organizational context, it is a sort of discussion with an employee about a problem that has usually emotional content in order to help him cope with it in a better way. The basic objective of counselling is to bring an employee back to his normal mental position in which he was before the emotional problem emerged.

Such an emotional problem might have emerged due to the mal-adjustment of the employee because of organizational factors or his personal factors. Some of the organizational factors causing this mal-adjustment may be nature of job, nature of supervision, apathetic work group, interpersonal conflict, etc.

Employee's personal factors may be his personal and family life, unwelcome happening in his family life, his inability to meet job requirements, etc. All these factors lead to emotional mal-adjustment, and if it is not overcome by proper counselling, the employee may show the sign of breaking up which is dysfunctional to both the organization as well as the employee.

There may be situation in an organization when despite of everything being in perfect shape the employee does not perform well. This poses serious threats. An employee, who may be doing the work, but not performing well, is a liability for the organizations. The most effective and proven method of dealing with these kind of problems is counselling. Counselling has numerous benefits it not only supports good employee performance but also addresses the causes of poor and marginal performance.

There are certain prerequisites of a successful counsellor. The first and foremost is that he/she should be approachable and possess good interpersonal and communication skills. Armed with an open mind and flexible and challenging attitude, should have a genuine desire to help others.

Employee Counselling takes place in the context of a helping relationship in which both the counsellor and the employee work together to resolve a problem, change behavior or foster personal growth and awareness. The counselling relationship is confidential and not reciprocal. The focus of a counsellor is to offer support and encouragement to the employee.

Employee Counselling is based on the premise that employee performance can be enhanced if the employee is properly counselled by skilled managers. Employee Counselling is defined as working to help poor or underperforming employees improve and therefore it is vital to have an effective and well-documented counselling for two important reasons – firstly to improve performance and secondly to serve as support and possible evidence for subsequent termination if the employee fails to improve.

Managers frequently identify counselling as a task that they have trouble implementing. For successful counselling it is important to win the employee's confidence that change is needed, identify the problem, agree to specific actions the employee would take, providing regular feedback and recognizing improvements. Counselling helps in improving employee performance when applied properly and at the appropriate time.

Employee Counselling – Meaning

Employee counselling is a vital part of performance review and potential appraisal, if these are to achieve their basic purpose of helping employees to improve and develop. Unless carefully and sensitively handled, employees may become more dissatisfied after the counselling than before.

Counselling is described as the help provided by the supervisor to the subordinates in analysing their performance and other behaviours on the job, in order to improve their performance. Counselling is also used sometimes in the sense of coaching and reviewing one's performance. Such a review identifies not only the potential for development but also the training needs for further improvements.

Employee counselling is a method of understanding and helping individuals who have technical, personal and emotional adjustment problems interfering with their work performance.

The personal adjustment of an employee is often improved when he is able to obtain information that he needs for reaching an intelligent solution to his problems or when he is able to express his feelings without fear of reprisal. Counselling is a sophisticated form of communication in which attempts are focused to maintain constructive attitudes.

Viewed in this manner, counselling has been practised in one form or the other since the evolution of mankind. In every field which requires dealing with people, counselling is essential. The origin of counselling as a scientific procedure can be traced back to the psychoanalytical method of Freud and client – centred counselling method of Carl Rogers used in therapeutic setting.

Though counselling in the context of employment is different from counselling in a therapeutic setting, what is commonly applicable to both is a strong relationship between the client and the counsellor by developing and expressing attitudes of congruence, acceptance and empathy by the counsellor. These attitudes must have been experienced by a client and he must feel that he is psychologically well received by the counsellor.

The counselling activity in industries may be said to have emerged from the founding stages of the human relations movement when the Hawthorn Plant of the Western Electric Company in Chicago installed a personnel counselling programme that utilized special rules for interviewing derived from the need of eliciting from the employees matters of emotional significance to them.

Since then, counselling in industries has been found to be useful and of special assistance in alleviating attitudes that are detrimental to both the employee and the organization. At present, counselling in industries can be thought of as a type of interview in which attention is focused on the individual's feelings and attitudes towards a problem area and in which an attempt is made to help the person to reach a satisfactory solution to his problem.

Counselling in industries is a special method of problem solving which adopts the perspective that people can think well when they think aloud with someone else who will question their thoughts, help them to clarify their thoughts and help to start the process of generating solutions or managing situations more effectively.

Employee Counselling – Concept

Counselling is a two-way process in which a counsellor provides help to the workers by way of advice and guidance. There are many occasions in work situations when a worker feels the need for guidance and counselling. The term 'counselling' refers to the help given by a superior to his subordinate in improving the latter's performance.

It is a process of helping the employees to achieve better adjustment with his work environment to behave as a psychologically mature individual, and help in

achieving a better understanding with others so that his dealings with them can be effective and purposeful. Thus, the basic objective of counselling is overall development of the employee.

According to Keith Davis – Employee counselling involves a discussion of an emotional problem with an employee with the general objective of decreasing it.

This definition has three concept:

(i) Counselling deals with emotional problems.

(ii) Counselling involves discussion i.e., it is an act of communication. Successful counselling depends on communication skills, primarily face-to-face, by which one person's emotions can be shared with another.

(iii) The general objective of counselling is to understand and/or decrease an employee's emotional disorder. If two individuals merely discuss an emotional problem of either of them, a social relationship may be established, but hardly a counselling one, because intent is not there. For counselling to exist, an employee must be seeking an understanding or help and/or the other (known as counsellor) must be offering it.

Employee Counselling – Need and Objectives

Need for Employee Counselling:

Employees undergo tremendous stress of completing the targets, work-load, meeting deadlines, relations with subordinates or colleagues, work-life balance, lack of time and higher responsibility.

Therefore, following are some of the reasons as to why there should be counselling at work places:

1. There is a need for the employees to come out from the problems, gives a new way to deal with the problems.
2. The employees need to know as to how much the employer care for the employee.
3. There is also a need to identify the work related problems and the poor performance.
4. There is a need to increase the productivity of employee and the confidence about the work.

Objectives of Employee Counselling:

The objectives of employee counselling are multidimensional and all concerned parties are benefitted due to employees counselling. The parties involved in benefits from employee counselling are employee, family member, peers, subordinates, seniors, organisation and society as a whole.

Due to this the popularity of employee counselling is increasing day-by-day in corporate section and mainly in medium and large sizes of organisations. The role of employee counselling in future will be more important.

The objectives of counselling could be stated as follows:

- (i) Counselling is an exchange of ideas and feelings between two persons.
- (ii) It is concerned with both personal and work problems.
- (iii) Counselling may be performed by both professionals and non-professionals.

(iv) Counselling is usually confidential so as to have free talk and discussion.

(v) It tries to improve organisational performance by helping the employees to cope with their problems.

i. Helping employees to realize their potential.

ii. Helping employees to understand their strengths and weaknesses.

iii. Providing employees an opportunity to acquire more insight into their behaviour and analyse the dynamics of such behaviour.

iv. Helping employees to have a better understanding of the environment.

v. Increasing personal and interpersonal effectiveness through effective feedback.

vi. Encouraging employees to set goals for further improvement; and

vii. Providing employees an atmosphere for sharing and discussing their tension, conflicts, concerns, and problems.

In an organizational setup, the trusting relationship with the supervisors is known as a dyadic relationship but the dyad need not always be the subordinate's supervisor. He/she may be his/her mentor with whom the subordinate has developed a trusting relationship which nurture, support, and guide him/her.

The concept of mentoring relates to emotional support and guidance usually given by a senior person to a younger one known as protege. Both counselling and mentoring involve help and support by a senior person to a younger one.

The three basic ingredients of the process are:

i. Communication

ii. Empowering, and

iii. Helping.

Communication involves receiving messages (listening), giving messages (responding), and giving feedback. The counsellor or the mentor does all these. The process of empowering enables the other person to exercise more autonomy, providing positive reinforcement so that the desirable behaviour is further strengthened and creates conditions in which the person is able to learn from the behaviour of the mentor. Finally, helping primarily involves identification of the developmental needs of the person being counselled so that he/she may be able to develop and increase his/her effectiveness.

Employee Counselling – Top 8 Types: Directive, Non-Directive, Cooperative, Participative, Desensitization, Catharsis, Insight & Developing the New Patterns

Effectiveness of counselling largely depends on the methods and techniques as well as the skills used by the counsellor. Methods and techniques of counselling change from person to person and from situation to situation.

Normally employee counselling involves the following types:

1. Directive Counselling,
2. Nondirective Counselling,
3. Cooperative Counselling,
4. Participative Counselling,
5. Desensitization,
6. Catharsis,
7. Insight, and
8. Developing the new patterns.

Type # 1. Directive Counselling:

It is full counselling. It is the process of listening to an employee's problem, deciding with the employee what should be done and telling and motivating the employee to do it. This type of counselling mostly does the function of advice, reassurance and communication. It may also perform other functions of counselling.

It centers on the counsellor. The counsellor, after hearing the problems of an employee, decides what should be done and gives advice and suggestion to him to resolve the problem. But directive counselling seldom succeeds, as people do not wish to take up advice normally, no matter how good it might be.

Type # 2. Non-Directive Counselling:

It is the process of skilfully listening to the emotional problems of an employee, understand him/her and determine the course of action to be adopted to resolve his problem. It focuses on the counselee hence it is called 'client centered' counselling. Professional counsellors usually adopt this method of counselling. The unique advantage of this type of counselling is its ability to cause the employees reorientation. The main stress is to 'change' the person instead of dealing with his immediate problem only.

The non-directive counsellor deals with respect the person so affected. He takes the person as best to solve his own problems and he facilitates the person to reach his goal.

In non-directive counselling, the employee is permitted to have maximum freedom in determining the course of the interview. It is the process of skilfully listening and encouraging a counselee to explain troublesome problems, understand them and determine appropriate solutions. Fundamentally, the approach is to listen, with understanding and without criticism or appraisal, to the problem as it is described by the employee.

The employee is encouraged, through the manager's attitude and reaction to what is said or not said, to express feelings without fear of shame, embarrassment, or reprisal. The free expression that is encouraged in the non-directive approach tends to reduce tensions and frustrations. The employee who has had an opportunity to release pent-up feelings is usually in a better position to view the problem more objectively and with a problem-solving attitude.

Type # 3. Cooperative Counselling:

Is the process in which both the counsellor and client mutually cooperate to solve the problems of the client. It is not neither wholly client centered nor wholly counsellor centered but it is centered both counsellor and client equally. It is defined as mutual discussion of an employee's emotional problem to set up conditions and plans of actions that will remedy it. This form of counselling appears to be more suitable to managerial attitude and temperament in our country.

Among the three forms of counselling, the advice offered in directive counselling considers the surface crises; the nondirective counselling goes to the underlining cause, the real crisis that leads the employee to understand his problem. It is thus suggested that nondirective counselling is, probably, the best among the three forms.

In attempting to help an employee who has a problem, a variety of counselling approaches are used. All of these counselling approaches, however, depend on active listening. Sometimes the mere furnishing of information or advice may be the solution to what at first appeared to be a knotty problem.

More frequently, however, the problem cannot be solved easily because of frustrations or conflicts that are accompanied by strong feelings such as fear, confusion, or hostility. A manager, therefore, needs to learn to use whatever approach appears to be suitable at the time. Flexibility is a key component of the employee counselling process.

Type # 4. Participative Counselling:

Both directive and non-directive methods suffer from limitations. While the former is often not accepted by independent employees, the latter needs professionals to operate and hence is costly. Hence, the counselling used in most situations is in between these two. This middle path is known as participative counselling.

Participative is a counsellor-counselee relationship that establishes a cooperative exchange of ideas to help solve an employee's problems. It is neither wholly counsellor centered nor wholly counselee-centered. Counsellor and counselee mutually apply their different knowledge, perceptions, skills, perspectives and values to problem into the problems and find solutions.

Type # 5. Desensitization:

According to Desensitization, once an individual is shocked in a particular situation, he/she gives himself/herself no chance for the situation to recur. This method can be used to overcome avoidance reactions, so as to improve the emotional weak spots. If an employee is once shocked by the behavior, approach or action of his superior, he would continue to avoid that superior.

It is difficult for such superiors to be effective counsellors, unless such superiors prove otherwise through their behavior or action on the contrary. Similarly, once an employee is shocked by a particular situation, he can be brought back to that situation only if he will be convinced through desensitization that the shock will not to take place further. Counsellor can make use of desensitization in such situations.

Type # 6. Catharsis:

Discharge of emotional tensions can be called catharsis. A Catharsis is an emotional discharge through which one can achieve a state of moral or spiritual renewal or achieve a state of liberation from anxiety and stress.

Catharsis is a Greek word and it means cleansing.

Emotional tensions can be discharged by talking them out or by relieving of the painful experience which engendered them. It is an important technique as a means of reducing the tensions associated with anxiety, fear, hostility, or guilt. Catharsis helps to gain insight into the ways an emotional trauma has been affecting the behaviour.

Originally, the term was used as a metaphor in Poetics by Aristotle to explain the impact of tragedy on the audiences.

The most common interpretation of the term ‘Catharsis’ is purgation and purification, and are still widely used. The most recent interpretation of the term catharsis is “intellectual clarification”

Type # 7. Insight:

Founded by Sigmund Freud, psychoanalysis or insight delves deep into an employee’s past and brings to light past experiences and current unconscious thoughts and behaviours of the employee, that are believed to be the cause of their current problems. Specifically, it targets how inner drives such as the id, superego, and ego conflict with outside pressures such as cultural or religious obligations.

Insight is the ability to acquire a new accurate awareness or comprehension about a thing or person. Insight therapy is a type of therapy that helps the employee to

understand how events in the past are negatively influencing the current thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. This type of treatment can be quite empowering for employees, because it is identifying the source of their problems. Identifying the reasons for low self-esteem, insecurity, depression, anxiety, etc., is the first step towards resolving those conflicts and issues.

With the help of insight one may find that he/she has devalued himself/herself unnecessarily, or his/her aspirations were unrealistic, or that his/her childish interpretation of an event was inaccurate. Then he/she can overcome the weakness.

Type # 8. Developing the New Patterns:

Developing new patterns becomes very often necessary when other methods to deal with weak spots remain ineffective. In order to develop new, more satisfying emotional reactions, the individual needs to expose himself to situations where he can experience positive feelings. The manager who deals with such individuals may motivate or instigate them to put themselves into such situations, so that their self-confidence may increase.

Every counsellor must concentrate his/her full attention on two aspects viz., using of assessment tools, and utilizing counselling methods, choice of which differs from person to person, situation to situation, and from case to case.

i. The id represents a constant in the personality as it is always present. Freud saw sexual energy as the only id, however, Freud added another instinct to the id Thanatos – the death instinct. The id is unconscious by definition – “It is the dark, inaccessible part of our personality”. It is filled with energy reaching it from the instincts, but it has no organization, produces no collective will, but only a striving to bring about the satisfaction of the instinctual needs and is based on the ‘pleasure principle’.

ii. The ego is the surface of the personality; the part one usually shows the world. The ego is governed by the ‘reality principle’, or a practical approach to the world. It seeks to turn the id’s drive to behavior which brings benefits in the long term rather than grief. Conscious awareness resides in the ego, although not all of the operations of the ego are conscious.

iii. The Super-ego aims for perfection. It comprises that part of the personality, mainly unconscious, which includes the individual’s ego ideals, spiritual goals, and conscience, that criticizes and prohibits his or her drives, fantasies, feelings, and actions.

“The Super-ego can be thought of as a type of conscience that punishes misbehaviour with feelings of guilt.” For example – having extra-marital affairs.